

## REMARKS

Claims 1-36 are pending in the instant application. Claim 1 has been canceled and replaced with claim 37. Claims 2-7, 9-13, and 15-36 have been amended. Claim 38 has been added. Support for the new and amended claims is found in the original claims and in the specification as originally filed. Claims 2-38 remain for consideration upon entry of the present Amendment. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner has stated that Claims 7, 14, 16-17, 20 and 29 would be allowable if re-written to overcome the rejections under 35 USC §112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph as set forth below. As stated in the Remarks section, these claims have been amended as requested by the Examiner. Applicants submit the amended claims have overcome the rejections under 35 USC § 112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph and request these claims be passed to allowance.

Claims 1-36 have been rejected under 35 USC §112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph as being indefinite and generally narrative and for failing to conform to U.S. practice. According to the Examiner, the claims appear to be a literal translation into English from a foreign document and are replete with grammatical and idiomatic errors.

As stated in the Remarks sections, claims 2-7, 9-13, and 15 have been amended. Claim 1 has been canceled and new claims 37 and 38 have been added to comply with the requirement of 35 USC §112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph. Thus, Applicants submit the rejection is now moot and request it be withdrawn.

Claims 1-2, 5-6, 8-13, 15, 18, 19, 21-22, 26-28, 30-33, 35-36 have been rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,927,374 to Batty (hereinafter "Batty"). This rejection is transversed and reconsideration is requested, particularly in view of the cancellation of Claim 1 and of the clarifying addition of new claim 37.

Batty is directed to an electrical connector assembly comprising a keyed connector assembly that can be assembled from a plurality of separate

components. The electrical connector assembly comprises first and second connectors each having a plurality of terminals. The connectors each have an outer housing, which are mutually engagable upon mating. The connectors are latched together by resilient collet fingers on one housing which engage a cylindrical ridge on the inner core of the other housing. An outer shiftable sleeve on the second housing is shiftable from a retracted position to a fully extended position in which the resilient collet fingers are trapped between the shiftable sleeve and the cylindrical ridge to hold the two connectors together. The shiftable sleeve is spring loaded relative to the inner core of the second connector. The shiftable sleeve is assembled to the inner core of this connector membrane and then rotated relative to the inner core. Anti-rotation means provided on the shiftable sleeve and on the inner core engage after rotation so that the springs are confined between the shiftable sleeve and the inner core. Batty is distinguished from conventional pin and socket connector assemblies by permitting a multi-pin connector assemblies to be assembled in twelve separate configurations using a modular construction.

However, Batty does not teach or suggest an electric contact coupling comprising a first and second contact carrier, which is approximately rotationally symmetrical about the coupling axis as is recited in claim 37 of the present application. As presently claimed, the first contact carrier defines a plug portion and an outer surface on which first contact elements are slidably arranged. The second contact carrier defines a socket portion adapted to mate with the plug portion and an inner surface on which second contact elements are slidably arranged. The two contact carriers are arranged in respectively associated contact carrier housings. The first contact carrier is movable by axially relative to the first contact carrier housings to bring the first contact carrier contacts into engagement with the contacts of the second carrier after the two carrier housing have been brought into engagement with one another. Batty is directed to an electric connector assembly in which coupling procedure is achieved by resilient collet fingers on one housing which engage a cylindrical ridge on the inner core of the other housing. The positioning in the axial direction in Batty is achieved by a shiftable sleeve, which is spring loaded relative to the inner core of the connector. Thus, the angular orientation of the coupled first and second contact carriers as defined

in Claim 37 of the instant invention is not taught or remotely suggested in Batty.

For an anticipation rejection to be appropriate, each and every element or limitation in a rejected claim must be shown in the prior art reference used in the claim rejection. Because Batty does not teach, show or even remotely suggest an electric coupling device comprising a first plug contact carrier movable by a positioning mechanism axially relative to its housing in order to engage its contacts with the contacts of a second socket carrier, it cannot be maintained that claim 37 (formerly claim 1) is anticipated by Batty. Moreover, because claims 2, 5-6, 8-13, 15, 18, 19, 21-22, 26-28, 30-33, 35-36 each depend from and thereby incorporate the limitations of claim 37, these claims are likewise deemed not anticipated by Batty for the reasons set forth for claim 37. Accordingly, for all these reasons, the rejection of the claims under 35 USC §102(b) should be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 3-4 have been rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,529,510 to Wakata et al. (hereinafter "Wakata"). This rejection is respectfully transversed and reconsideration is respectfully requested, particularly in view of the clarifying addition of new claim 37.

Wakata is directed to connection terminals that are mounted within male and female connectors, wherein at least one of the connection terminals is received in a holder hole for displacement in an axial direction and is urged by a spring in a push-out direction. A spiral passageway is formed in one of an outer peripheral surface of one connection terminal and a bore wall of the holder hole and extends in an axial direction. The other connector is provided with guide that is engageable with the spiral passageway so as to angularly displace the one connection terminal in accordance with the fitting of the connection terminals.

Wakata does not teach suggest an electric contact coupling comprising a first and second contact carrier, which is approximately rotationally symmetrical about the coupling axis as recited in new independent claim 37

(formerly claim 1) of the present application. As presently claimed, the electric coupling assembly comprises two contact carriers, which are arranged in respectively associated contact carrier housings. As argued above, each of the contact carriers contains at least one of a first contact element and a second contact element, wherein the contact elements are electrically coupleable with one another along a coupling axis resulting in the contact carriers being approximately rotationally symmetrical about the coupling axis. The first contact carrier of claim 37 is movable by positioning axially relative to its housing to bring its contacts into engagement with the contacts of the second carrier after the two carrier housing have been brought into engagement with one another. This is not the coupling assembly taught by Wakata. On the contrary, Wakata is directed to an electric coupling assembly comprising connection terminals mounted in male and female connectors, wherein the connectors are rotatable in an axial direction to allow coupling of the connection terminals. One of the connection terminals is received in a holder hole for displacement in an axial direction and is urged by a spring in a push out direction. A spiral passageway is formed in one of an outer peripheral surface of one connection terminal and a bore wall of the holder hole and extends in an axial direction. The other connector includes a guide that engages the spiral passageway so as to angularly displace the one connection terminal with the fitting of the other connection terminal.

Because the Wakata connector does not structurally allow the male and female connectors to be rotationally symmetrical about the coupling axis as is claimed in the instant invention, it cannot be maintained that re-drafted claim 1 ( new claim 37) anticipates Wakata. Moreover, because claims 3 and 4 each depend from and thereby incorporate the limitations of claim 37, these claims are likewise deemed not anticipated by Wakata for the reasons set forth for claim 37. Accordingly, for all these reasons, the rejection of the claims under 35 USC §102(b) should be withdrawn.

Claims 23-25 and 34 have been rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Batty in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,746,611 to Brown et al. (hereinafter "Brown").

As argued above, the Examiner believes that Batty allegedly discloses the same invention as claimed in re-drafted claim 1 (claim 37). However, it has been demonstrated that Batty does not teach or suggest an electric coupling assembly comprising contact carriers being approximately rotationally symmetrical about the coupling axis. Since the disclosure of Brown does not cure this deficiency, it cannot be maintained that claims 23-25 and 34, which depend on claim 37 are obvious over Batty in view of Brown.

Applicants submit that the Batty and Brown fail as separate references and when combined as suggested by the Examiner to disclose, teach or suggest the electric contact coupling as recited in the claims of the instant invention. Applicants have already noted herein the deficiencies in Batty. Brown does not cure these deficiencies. Thus, Applicants' submit that the Examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness. Inasmuch as the Batty reference in view of Brown does not teach or suggest each and every limitation of independent claim 37, the Examiner's rejection under § 103(a) is also improper. Accordingly, reconsideration and removal of the rejection for claims 23-25 and 34 as amended is respectfully requested

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the claims as amended are allowable.

Applicants have noted the Examiner's objection to the Declaration. In compliance with 37 CFR § 1.63(e) Applicants have submitted a cover letter, which accurately identifies the Serial Number, submitted and an additional copy of the Declaration. The attached cover letter now directs the fully executed Declaration to the application filed in the USPTO on July 3, 2003.


All issues raised by the Examiner have been addressed.

Applicants hereby petition for a one-month extension of time in order to file a Response to the Office Action on the above-identified application. The fee of \$110.00 required under 37 CFR 1.17(a) is enclosed.

If any additional extension of time for the accompanying response is required, Applicants request that this paper be considered a petition therefore.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees under 37 CFR 1.17(a) to (d), which may be required to Deposit Account No. 13-0235.

Respectfully submitted,

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